

Introduction

Best Academy Charter School has made significant steps to address the significantly high number of suspensions and expulsions that have happened at Best Academy over the past five years. On November 2, 2017, the MN Department of Human Rights in collaboration with the Best Academy staff met to review suspension and expulsion data and create a plan for how the district would address this need. This report is to address the stated objectives and tasks that are outlined in the Suspension Reduction Plan, that was attached to the agreement between the MN Department of Human Rights and the Best Academy that was signed, on March 27 by Best Academy and March 28 by Commissioner Lindsey of the MN Department of Human Rights. As outlined in the report, this semi-annual summary will include, but not be limited to:

Philosophy Statement

Best Academy has the following objectives as outlined in its Suspension Reduction Plan.

Objectives

- Maintain authorizer standards for overall school attendance.
- Decrease the number of office referrals for negative behavior by 10%.
- Decrease the number of suspensions by 30%.
- To increase positive student behavioral choices and reduce negative behavior.
- To provide a positive academic environment which is safe, orderly, and conducive to learning.

1. Maintain authorizer standards for overall school attendance.

The school maintains 95% attendance, which is in line with their authorizer goals.

2. Decrease the number of office referrals for negative behavior by 10%.

The school reduced office referrals by 50 % for negative behavior.

3. Decrease the number of suspensions by 30%

The number of suspensions decreased, in 18-19 by 51%.

4. Increase positive student behavior choices and reduce negative behavior.

The district has engaged PBIS Training and all staff are encouraged to use these principals. The district has had several trainings and this is part of the teacher observation rubric. As a part of the teacher observation rubric, the school also applied to the PBIS cohort 20. They were not accepted. The school is working to apply and be accepted into the next cohort, and are doing pre work on implementing “buy in strategies” with the academic staff.

5. Provide a positive academic environment which is safe, orderly and conducive to learning.

The district encourages students to use a check in check out system. The staff have also been trained on check in and check out. The strategies utilized vary greatly at the middle school level than that of the elementary. Classwide elementary guidance lessons have helped greatly.

Professional Development for Staff

Best Academy has worked to ensure that staff had professional development in de-escalation skills, positive interventions, assertions, problem-solving, cultural competency, conflict resolution, and responses to behavior that are age appropriate. The school has engaged Project Diva as well as the PBIS Model. Staff was trained this year on PBIS and this approach has been implemented since September 2018.

Professional Development

Staff will engage in mandatory professional development opportunities focused of student discipline. These will occur both before the school year and throughout the school year.

- Professional development activities will present information on de-escalation skills, positive intervention, assertion, problem solving, implicit bias, cultural competency, conflict resolution, and age-appropriate responses to behavior,
- Best Academy school staff will continue to receive training from the Wilder Center on Trauma Informed Education.
- Professional development activities will also include high quality classroom management, organization and instructional strategies to be used

Best Academy will also track trainings completed by staff and measure the effectiveness of all training identified above consistent with identified metrics.

| Training Title | Date | % of Staff in Attendance |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| School Wide Behavior Management Process (Introducing BMC) | 7/25/18 7/27/18 7/30/18 8/01/18 Monthly Trainings at Staff PD 1/4/19 1/5/19 | 100% 20% 100% 100% Meeting averaging 87% |
| Referral Process | 8/03/18 Weekly Meetings, SST Refresher on SST Process Monthly at House Meetings | 100% Meeting averaging 73% |

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 8 Essentials of SWISS | 9/18/18 Monthly Trainings at Staff PD | 80% Averaging 85% attendance. |
| PBIS Training | 9/14/18 11/1/2019 1/30/19 4/20/19 5/1/19 | 80% 90% 90% |

Policy and Language Alignment

Policy and Language Alignment

Before the end of the 2017-2018 school year, the Principal and all relevant personnel shall ensure that there is consistency concerning:

- The language, terms, and definitions used by school personnel to determine when students engage in identified removal behavior;
- When school personnel may remove a student from class;
- When a student may be suspended or expelled for engaging in identified removal behavior; and
- The length of time a student may be suspended or expelled for engaging in identified removal behavior;
- School Bullying Policy and the Parent & Scholar Code of Conduct.

In the above-mentioned area, the Student Code of Conduct was redone, with the dissolution of The Harvest Network of Schools. There is consistency with the above mentioned areas including;

1. Language and terms for removing a student from class.
2. Clarification on when a student may be removed..
3. Clarification on suspension and expulsion criteria.
4. Clarification of the School Bullying Policy.

It has now become apparent that there needs to be more emphasis on these policies, catering them to the unique needs of the school. There has been a review committee established to look at these policies and how they might be revised to meet the student and family needs.

School Wide Initiatives

School wide Initiatives

- Distribution of Parent & Scholar Code of Conduct to parents and staff.
- Orientation for parents and student assemblies at the beginning of the year.
- Rules and procedures are posted throughout the school.
- Daily announcements and newsletters serve as reminders.
- All personnel model desired behavior.
- All adults in the building actively monitor students' behavior rewarding with verbal praise or redirecting student behavior as needed.
- Students exhibiting positive behavior will;
 - Attend Fun Friday events
 - Attend field trips.
 - Receive citizenship awards.
- Emphasis on Character Education and Character Building
 - Curriculum is taught at each grade level.
 - The staff models appropriate character traits.
 - Incentives are provided for students who exhibit positive character traits (see above list).

Classroom Initiatives

- Teachers directly instruct and model behavior expectations and rules.
- Rules and expectations are posted in the classroom.
- Teachers establish routines and procedures.
- Teachers use 'Morning Meetings' to establish a climate of trust, safety, and respect.
- Active monitoring of rule following behavior.
- Classroom management will include plans for transitioning from one activity to another, as well as the organization and cleanliness of the learning environment.

In the area mentioned above, Best Academy has made great strides. Each family was given a copy of the Student Code of Conduct, which was updated in July of 2018. Teachers and staff are using Morning Meetings to establish safety and trust in their classrooms and there was a Back to School Night on August 9th, 2018. Best Academy has been holding Fun Friday events, field trips and actively monitoring students behavior with praise. Best Academy also made a point to call bullying and harassment to the forefront. There has been a concentrated effort to address bullying in a proactive manner, what advocates for proactive approaches to friendship, advocacy and getting one's SEL needs met.

Community Engagement

Best Academy will focus on improving dialog among students, parents, teachers and administrators on topics regarding discipline

- There will be consistent application, by personnel, as to when to involve parents in attempts to improve a student's behavior; training provided to personnel on when and how best to involve parents; and consistency of feedback provided to personnel when deviations occur in the implementation of policy.
- During the school's annual meeting Best Academy will report on discipline initiatives, the MDHR Plan, as well as review the discipline policy. During this time parents and community members will have the opportunity to raise concerns and share suggestions.
- Best Academy will ask discipline specific questions on its Parent Survey in order to assess the effectiveness of charter school strategies that seek to increase engagement and policy clarity.
- Before the start of the School Year copies of the school's Parent & Scholar Code of Conduct will be distributed to staff and parents whether electronically or in a hard copy. A copy of the Parent & Scholar Code of Conduct will remain in the school's front office at all time.

Community Engagement continues to be an area that Best Academy is addressing. The scholar and Parent Code of Conduct were distributed to each parent. There is a copy available in the front office as well as one on the website.

Discipline Committee

The discipline committee will meet every two weeks and review all suspensions that have taken place. They will review the antecedents for the behavior, any other circumstances that may fall into the behavior and will create a plan to address the behavior with the scholar. The committee is made up of the:

1. School Principal
2. Special Education Coordinator
3. School Board Member and
4. Behavior Interventionist.

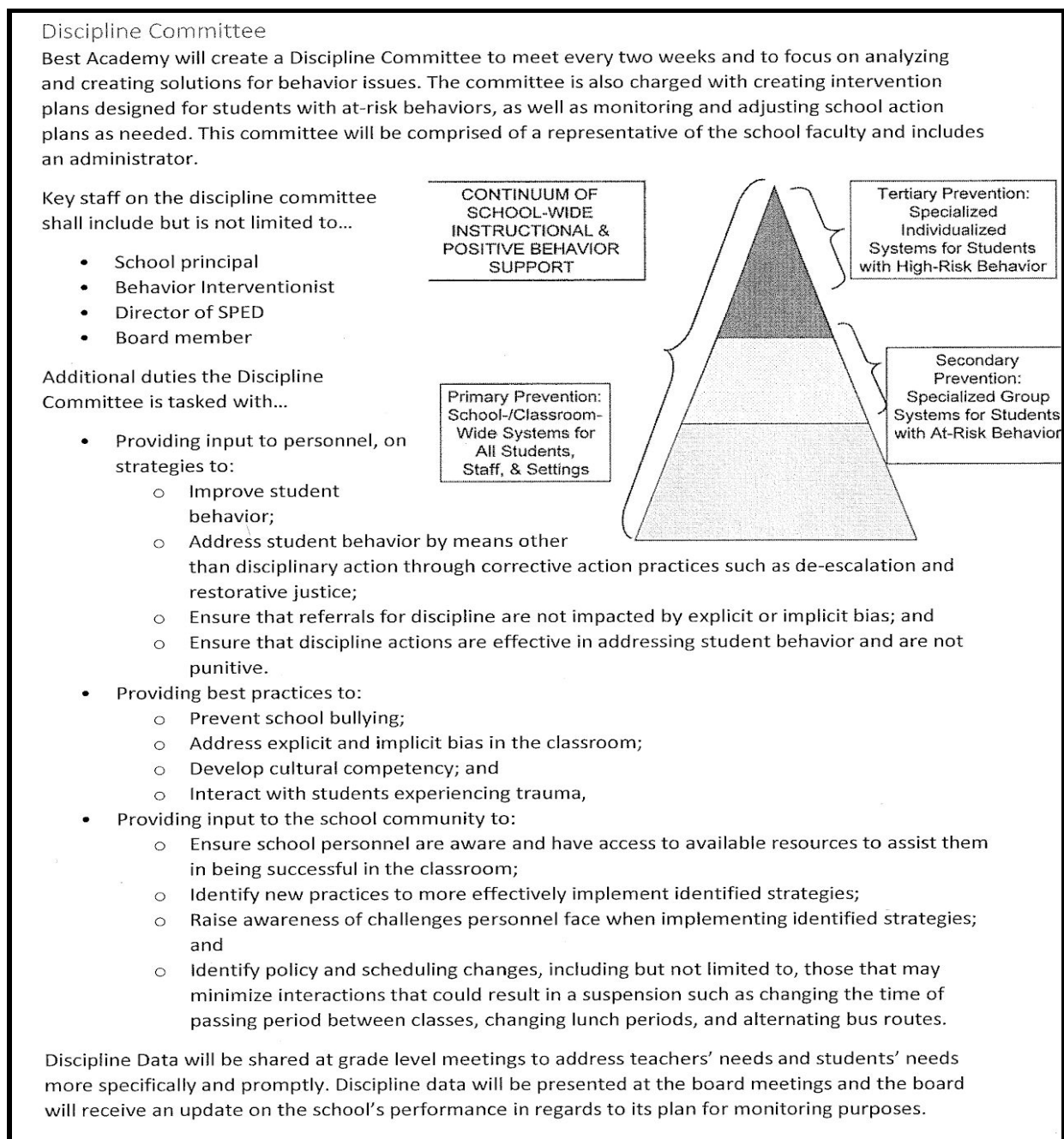
Other members may join the committee if they would like or if they are asked by a school administrator.

The purpose of the committee is to help with alternate behavioral resources.

The Discipline Committee meets every other Friday at 9:00. Averaging 83% attendance at these committee meetings.

Attendance and minutes are taken at these meetings. The information from these meetings is included in the board report of the school principal at the monthly board of directors meeting.

The school is also utilizing the Student Support Team (SST). This group meets weekly and reviews scholars who are referred to SST for continued struggles with academics or behavior. The purpose of the SST is to create high quality, research-based interventions that will allow students to access education and in an effort to decrease the number of special education evaluations that are taking place.



Best Academy looks forward to continued participation and partnership with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights.

In Partnership,

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